



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Johnny Key, Commissioner

July 10, 2017

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Arkansas' ACT Aspire Preliminary Scores Reflect Several Significant Increases

LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas students made significant improvements on the ACT Aspire in 2016-2017. Results reflect statistically significant increases in the percentage of students who met readiness benchmarks in multiple grades and subject areas.

The largest increases occurred in grades 6 and 8 math and writing. Large gains occurred in writing for grades 4 through 8, with a 21.72 percent increase in grade 5. English Language Arts averages reflect statistically significant increases, particularly for grade 4. Large gains in writing could be attributed to an extension of time on the writing portion, schools adapting to the new online testing format, high-quality professional development and classroom instruction specifically in the area of writing.

“These results are a positive reflection of the work of our dedicated educators,” Arkansas Department of Education Commissioner Johnny Key said. “The increase in Arkansas’ scores can be attributed to the full implementation of the state’s rigorous education standards, high-quality professional development, and innovative and evidence-based teaching practices in the classroom that encourage student engagement and learning.”

Percent Who Met Readiness Benchmarks
(2016-2017 Arkansas ACT Aspire Preliminary Scores)

Grade	Math	Science	English	Reading	Writing	ELA	STEM
3	58.52%	38.25%	73.17%	37.00%	19.17%	41.07%	42.67%
4	55.15%	42.40%	69.67%	43.19%	32.78%	48.19%	48.06%
5	52.15%	41.51%	72.45%	34.56%	42.09%	54.32%	46.86%

6	62.05%	48.95%	73.99%	46.64%	59.29%	62.16%	53.67%
7	48.17%	44.35%	78.61%	38.69%	38.04%	55.43%	43.27%
8	43.58%	42.08%	73.28%	48.99%	37.58%	57.27%	42.72%
9	30.23%	32.14%	58.46%	39.40%	50.71%	51.69%	31.72%
10	24.72%	33.22%	60.11%	36.38%	56.75%	51.05%	29.05%

Percent Change of Students Who Met Readiness Benchmarks From 2015-2016 to 2016-2017							
Grade	Math	Science	English	Reading	Writing	ELA	STEM
3	2.43%	1.66%	1.29%	1.87%	-1.21%	2.57%	2.27%
4	1.24%	3.31%	1.88%	1.80%	19.28%	7.99%	3.16%
5	3.78%	2.20%	-1.04%	0.90%	21.72%	4.02%	3.46%
6	6.59%	-3.40%	2.96%	1.00%	15.20%	4.86%	2.77%
7	4.54%	3.39%	1.06%	2.49%	9.55%	5.63%	5.67%
8	5.58%	3.47%	2.31%	0.68%	14.21%	4.77%	4.72%
9	1.84%	4.94%	4.22%	3.16%	6.81%	4.19%	3.92%
10	3.20%	3.91%	3.86%	1.77%	4.96%	3.55%	4.05%

“While we are pleased with the improvement, we must expect more,” Key added. “The data show we have work to do, and we will collaborate with Arkansas educators to determine how we can drive continuous improvement. We are confident that if we set high expectations for our students and provide

support to our educators, Arkansas will demonstrate stronger results in the years to come.”

The scoring rubrics and readiness benchmarks did not change in 2017. As a result, Arkansas students’ responses were scored under the same criteria as in the first year of the test’s administration.

Districts will have the opportunity to make corrections to their student data prior to accountability reports being published. The resulting Elementary and Secondary Education Act Accountability Reports will become part of the data incorporated in the accountability plan required by ESEA’s reauthorization, the Every Student Succeeds Act. Approved ESEA data corrections also will be used on the School Performance Report Card, for the Arkansas School Recognition Program, and to determine if schools and/or districts meet criteria for removal from Priority or Focus status.

Background

The mission of the Arkansas Department of Education is to provide leadership, support and service to schools, districts and communities so every student graduates prepared for college, career and community engagement. In order to measure the degree to which students are graduating ready for college and career, the department has adopted the ACT Aspire assessments as one measure of student performance. The 2016-2017 results reflect Arkansas’ second administration of the ACT Aspire.

The ACT Aspire assessment system was developed specifically to measure what is most important for college and career readiness and to give evidence as early as third grade regarding student progress on the trajectory toward college and career readiness. School districts have responded positively to the reduced testing time averaging four-and-a-half hours as compared to the previous 12 hours, allowing more time for classroom instruction. Schools should continue to use multiple measures to determine student progress toward academic goals.

Approximately 288,000 students in grades 3 through 10 participated in the assessments. Every Arkansas school tested online with the exception of students who required paper assessments as an accommodation.

The ACT Aspire is administered as five separate assessments: English, reading, writing, math and science. The results also include scores for English Language Arts (an average of English, reading and writing) and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (an average of math and science).

More Information

For more information and to see school, district, state and national scores, please visit the ADE website at <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/learning-services/student-assessment/test-scores/year?y=2017>.

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